

Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt

(The Scatterers)

This Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. It contains 60 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 23

وَالْدُّرِيَتِ ذَرُوا ۝۱۰۝ فَالْحَمِلَتِ وِقْرًا ۝۱۱۝ فَالْجِرِيَتِ يُسْرًا ۝۱۲۝
 فَالْمُقْسِمَتِ أَمْرًا ۝۱۳۝ إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٍ ۝۱۴۝ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ
 ۝۱۵۝ وَالسَّمَاءُ ذَاتُ الْحُبُكِ ۝۱۶۝ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُخْتَلِفٍ ۝۱۷۝
 يُؤْفَكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أَفْكَ ۝۱۸۝ قُتِلَ الْخَرْصُونَ ۝۱۹۝ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غُرْمَةٍ
 سَاهُونَ ۝۲۰۝ يَسْتَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۝۲۱۝ يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ
 يُفْتَنُونَ ۝۲۲۝ ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ۝۲۳۝
 إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَعَيْوَنٍ ۝۲۴۝ الْخَذِينَ مَا أَنَّهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ۝۲۵۝ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ ۝۲۶۝ كَانُوا فَلِيًّا لِمَنِ الْيَوْمَ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ
 ۝۲۷۝ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ۝۲۸۝ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِلْسَّائِلِ
 وَالْمَحْرُومٌ ۝۲۹۝ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ أَيْتَ لِلْمُوْقِنِينَ ۝۳۰۝ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ
 أَفَلَا تُبَصِّرُونَ ۝۳۱۝ وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ ۝۳۲۝ فَوَرَبٌ
 السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْكُمْ تَنْتَقِلُونَ ۝۳۳۝

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, [1] then by those (clouds) that bear loads, [2] then by those (boats) that sail with ease, [3] then by those (angels) who distribute things, [4] whatever you are being promised is surely true, [5] and Recompensing (of deeds) is sure to happen. [6] By the sky, having paths, [7] you are (involved) in a contradictory statement. [8] Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away (totally from the Truth.) [9] Death upon those who make conjectures (against the true faith), [10] those who are drowned in ignorance, forgetful! [11] They ask, "When shall be the Day of Recompense?" [12] (It will be) the Day when they will be heated on the Fire, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "Taste (the punishment of) your mischief. This is what you have been asking to be brought sooner." [14] The God-fearing (on the other hand) will be in gardens and springs, [15] receiving what their Lord will have given to them. Indeed, prior to this, they were good in their deeds. [16] They used to sleep little in the night, [17] and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for forgiveness, [18] and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived. [19]

And in the earth, there are signs for those who (seek truth to) believe, [20] and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive? [21] And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised. [22] So, by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, it (the Day of Recompense) is a reality, as sure as that you speak. [23]

Affirmation of After-Life

The subject-matter of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, like its predecessor Sūrah Qāf, is mainly the Hereafter, Resurrection, Reckoning, Judgement, and Allah's reward and punishment. The first few verses contain an oath from Allah that the promise of Resurrection is true, and shall come to pass. In these verses Allah swears an oath by four phenomena, as follows:

وَالدُّرِّيْتُ ذَرْوَا . فَالْحِمْلَتُ وَقْرَا . فَالْجَرِيْتُ يُسْرَا . فَالْمُقْسِمَتُ أَمْرَا .

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, then by those (clouds) that bear loads, then by those (boats) that sail with ease, then by those (angels) who distribute things, (51:1-4)

There is a Ḥadīth whose attribution to the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been held by Ibn Kathīr as *da'īf* [weak], but it is also reported as a saying of

Sayyidnā ‘Umar ﷺ and ‘Alī ﷺ. It explains these four things as follows: The expression Dhāriyāt [scatterers] refers to the wind that blows up dust; the expression *ḥāmilāt-i-wiqran* literally denotes burden-bearers and contextually refers to the clouds that carry the burden of water or rain; the expression *jāriyāt-i-yusran* refers to the ships that sail smoothly and with ease in the water; and the expression *muqassimāt-i-amran* refers to the angels who distribute to all creatures their sustenance and water, and different kinds of difficulties and comfort as determined by Allah's orders and decrees (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr quote these narrations both as *marfū'* and *mawqūf*).

وَالسَّمَاءُ ذَاتُ الْحَبْكَ، إِنْكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُخْتَلِفٍ (By the sky, having paths, you are (involved) in a contradictory statement - 51:7-8) *Hubuk* is the plural *ḥabīkah* and primarily denotes thin irregular lines or streaks on fabrics when woven. They resemble tracks and pathways; therefore pathways are also referred to as *hubuk* in Arabic. Most interpreters take this to be the meaning in this context. Some scholars say that the 'tracks' refer to pathways used by the angels for entrance and exit. Others say that the tracks or paths of heaven are those orbits of planets and stars that are visible in the sky.

As the streaks of the woven fabric is its beauty, some scholars tend to interpret the verse as 'By the heaven full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection'.

Differing Beliefs of the Pagans

إِنْكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُخْتَلِفٍ (you are [involved] in a contradictory statement... 51:8) Verse [7] was an oath and this verse is the statement for which oath is sworn. Apparently, the verse addresses the pagans of Makkah who assigned contradictory attributes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, calling him at different times a madman, a sorcerer, a poet and other discordant names. According to another possible interpretation, the verse addresses the entire humankind - Muslims as well as non-believers. Thus 'contradictory statement' would mean that a sector believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accepted him; and another sector rejected him and opposed him (Mazhari).

يُرَفَّكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أُنْكَ (Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away.....51:9). The word 'ufik literally denotes to turn away. The pronoun in 'anhu' has two possibilities: [1] it could be referring to Qur'ān and Rasūl. In this case, the verse would mean that only that person turns

away from the Qur'ān who has been destined to be deprived of their guidance. And [2] the pronoun could be referring to the 'contradictory statement' in which case the meaning would be: he who turns away from the truth because of your discordant thoughts, is the one deprived of truth.

﴿ قُتِلَ الْخَرْصُونَ ﴾ (Death upon those who make conjectures - 51:10). The expression *kharrāṣūn* is the plural of *kharrāṣ* which means one who estimates or say things by conjecture. In this context the word refers to those stubborn and obstinate infidels who, without any reason or evidence, say discordant things about the Messenger ﷺ. Thus it would not be out of turn to interpret *kharrāṣūn* as *kadhdhābūn*, meaning 'the great liars' as they are condemned, denounced, cursed and imprecated (Mazhari) in this statement. After the mention of infidels, several verses that follow describe the qualities of the righteous people and the pleasant consequences of their righteousness.

Remaining Awake at Night for Voluntary Prayers

﴿ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ الْأَيْلَى مَا يَهْجِمُونَ ﴾ (They used to sleep little in the night,... 51:17). The imperfect verb *yahja'ūn* is derived from the infinitive *hujū'* which means to sleep at night. The verse describes the quality of the righteous believers is that they spend their nights in voluntary worship of Allah. They sleep little at night and remain awake during the greater part of it. Ibn Jarīr preferred this interpretation. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said: "The righteous perform voluntary night prayers, and do not sleep during the night except a little." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah رضي الله عنهما, Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى and other leading scholars of *Tafsīr* have taken the particle *mā* in the sense of negation, that is, grammatically they treat it as *mā nāfiyah* or negative particle, meaning they spend a little part of every night awake, and not sleeping. They would worship Allah and perform voluntary prayers every night, even during a small part of the night. From this point of view, it includes all those people who pray to Allah during any part of the night - whether in the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of it. Therefore, Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنهما and 'Abul-'Āliyah said: "They used to pray between Maghrib and 'Ishā'." Imām Abū Ja'far Baqir said that this includes those people who do not sleep before 'Ishā' prayer (Ibn Kathīr).

Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports from Aḥnaf Ibn Qais who used to say: "When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Paradise, I

found that they are a people who occupy a very high, lofty and elevated status; and they are a people whose deeds are incomparable and our deeds cannot match theirs, because they sleep little at nights and worship much. When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Hell, I found that they give the lie to Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ and are sceptical about the Hereafter [from which Allah has protected us]. Therefore, in comparison, our deeds match neither with those of the real inmates of Paradise, nor [praise be to Allah] with those of the inmates of Hell. Thus we learn that from the viewpoint of action, our position is what the Qur'ān describes: ... خَلَطُوا عَمَلاً صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا (They had mixed a good deed with another that was evil. - 9:102) Thus the best person amongst us is the one who would at least remain within the boundaries of this class of people."

'Abd-ur-rahmān Ibn Zaid Ibn Aslam ﷺ says that a member of the tribe Banū Tamīm said to my father: "O Abū 'Usāmah, we do not find that quality in us which Allah mentions in describing the righteous, that is, كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِنَ الَّيلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ, 'They used to sleep little in the night,' because our position is quite the contrary: 'قَلِيلًا مِنَ الَّيلِ مَا نَقُومُ' We are very little awake at night to worship Allah'. My father replied:

طَوَّبَ لِمَنْ رَقَدَ إِذَا نَعَسَ وَاتَّقَى اللَّهَ إِذَا اسْتَيَقَطَ

'Good tidings for him who sleeps away when he feels sleepy and exercises righteousness when he is awake, that is, does not do any work that is contrary to Shari'ah.'"

In other words, acceptance in the sight of Allah is not necessarily restricted to protracted waking hours at night for worship. If a person is impelled to sleep, and does not remain awake for long, but abstains from any sinful activities when awake, he is also worthy of felicitation.

'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ﷺ reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَطْعُمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصِلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ وَأَفْتَنُوا السَّلَامَ وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نَيَامٌ
تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ . (ابن كثير)

"O people, feed people, do good to kith and kin, greet each other with *salām*, pray at night while people are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace." (Ibn Kathīr)

Merits of Seeking Forgiveness in the hours before dawn

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ (and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for

forgiveness..., 51:18) The word *ashār* is the plural of *sahar*, and it refers to the latter sixth part of the night. This verse speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness in the latter part of the night. Another verse [3:17] also speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness at the last hours of the night thus: ﴿وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرُونَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ﴾ (...and who seek forgiveness in pre-dawn hours. - 3:17) It is confirmed in the Ṣaḥīḥ collections as well as others, from several Companions, that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Allah, the Most High, descends each night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says: 'Is there anyone who is repenting, so that I may accept his repentance? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone asking of Me, so that I may grant him his request?'

Here it may be noted that in this verse Allah is describing the pre-dawn prayer of forgiveness of those righteous ones who, according to the preceding verse, are preoccupied for the major part of the night with the worship of Allah and sleep very little. Thus there seems to be no link between their previous description and their description of asking for forgiveness in this verse, because forgiveness is sought when there are sins. People who spent the entire night in worshipping Allah - what does it mean to seek forgiveness of sins? The answer to this question is that these people have the true appreciation of Allah's majesty, dignity and splendour, and they realise that there are shortcomings in their night-long worship. Therefore they seek Allah's forgiveness for failing to perform His worship as due. (Mazhari)

Special Guidance for Philanthropists

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِلْمُسْأَلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived...51:19) The word *sā'il* means the poor or needy who begs others, that is, he expresses his needs to people who help him. The word *mahrūm* also refers to a poor or needy, but who cannot express his needs from a sense of self-respect or a feeling of shame, and thus is deprived of people's help. In this verse another quality of the believers and the righteous is mentioned, that is, their quality of spending in charity in Allah's way. When spending, they do not only give to those who ask for help, but they also make it their responsibility to find out who are needy ones and do not disclose their needs to others.

The purpose of the verse is to show that the believers and the righteous do not only perform bodily worship, such as prayers and remaining awake at night, but they also play a major role in performing pecuniary worship, in that besides helping the people who beg they also look for, and help, those who out of self-respect do not express their needs to anyone. When mentioning this pecuniary worship, the expression used by the Qur'ān is the following, "وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ" "and in their wealth, there was a right". It means that when they meet the needs of the poor, they do not deem it a favour shown to them, but they appreciate that the poor have a 'right' in the wealth Allah has blessed them with, and fulfilling one's right is not a favour; it is rather a duty and responsibility that one has to discharge.

Allah's Signs on the Earth and in Mankind

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ أَيْتَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (And in the earth, there are signs for those who [seek truth to] believe,... 51:20). In the preceding verses in the first instance a description of the infidels and rejecters and their evil fate was given. As against those who flounder in the welter of wrong beliefs and evil deeds and deny the possibility of the Day of Judgement, the qualities of the believers and the righteous were subsequently given, and their elevated position was described. Now once again attention is drawn to those who deny the possibility of Judgement Day. They are invited to ponder on the signs of Allah on earth that testify to the might of the Creator and His boundless power, and thus the skeptics are advised to desist from denying the Judgement Day. In this way the statement is connected to the preceding statement in verse [8] "You are involved in contradictory statement."

Tafsīr Mazhharī is of the view that this verse too describes the quality of the believers and the righteous. The word *mūqinīn* (those who have certainty of faith) refers to the same God-fearing people mentioned in an earlier verse. The sense is that these people keep pondering on the divine signs spread on earth and in their own beings, and it increases their belief. In another verse they are described as وَيَنْفَكِرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ "...and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth...". (3:191)

Allah's signs on earth include what Allah has placed on the earth, the various plants, animals, valleys, mountains, deserts, rivers and oceans. He also created mankind with different languages, colours, intentions and abilities, and a variety among them, differences in the power of

understanding and comprehension, their deeds, and ultimately earning happiness or misery. Allah put every organ in their bodies in its rightful place where they most need it to be. Thus Allah says: وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ، إِنَّمَا تُبَصِّرُونَ (... and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive? ...51:21). Out of the innumerable signs of Allah's power which are present everywhere in the universe, including the heavenly and celestial beings and creatures, only those signs are referred to here which are available on earth, because they are very close to man's experience, and he resides and moves about among them. The present verse now speaks of man himself. Man is required to ponder on his own body, its limbs and organs. Every single part of the body testifies to the boundless Wisdom of Allah, and it will make him realize that his small being represents and encompasses almost all the divine signs that are scattered in the vast universe. That is why man is termed as 'the universe in miniature', because all types of creation are present in his existence. If a man thinks of all phases he has passed through right from his birth till his death, he may perceive the power of Allah Ta'ālā as if he discerns Him clearly.

The Development of the Sperm and Embryo in the Womb

Human microscopic sperm and egg is an amazing phenomenon. It is made up of foodstuff and tenuous particles from various parts of the world. If the sperm establishes itself in the mother's womb, then more material is added to it, and it changes into a red clot. It then changes and becomes a shapeless lump of flesh, like a piece of meat with no form or shape. Then out of this shapeless lump bones are fashioned; then the bones are clothed with flesh; and it starts to take on a form and shape, developing a head, arms, chest, stomach, thighs, legs, feet and all its members. A wonderful brain is placed under its skull in whose complicated layers lie all mental abilities. Thus equipping it, Allah sends an angel to it who breathes the soul into it. After the completion of its creation, it is brought into this world where he develops from infancy to full adulthood to old age. Then he gradually progresses from zero level of knowledge and consciousness to an intelligent, rational and active being. The human forms and shapes are so different that no two faces are identical in millions and billions of people even in a small area. Furthermore, there are differences in their temperaments, dispositions and habits. There is unity in this diversity. All this is the marvel of the perfect power of Allah who has neither partners nor rivals: فَبِرَبِّكَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ "So blessed is Allah, the Best Creator!"(23:14)

Man experiences all this not from outside himself, but within himself, day and night. Only a person who is absolutely blind and senseless will ever deny the existence of Allah. Therefore, at the conclusion of the verse, the Qur'ān poses the rhetorical question: أَفَلَا تَبْصِرُونَ "So, do you not perceive?" (21) A person need not be very intelligent to understand the facts of life. If his sight is intact, he can arrive at the right conclusion.

(وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ) (And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised.... 51:22). The plain and simple interpretation of this is that 'in heaven' here means what has been written in the Preserved Tablet (*Al-Lauh-ul-Mahfūz*). It is clear that man's sustenance, what has been promised to him and whatever its consequences will be - are all preserved in the Preserved Tablet. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ﷺ reports that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Even if someone tries to avoid and run away from his designated sustenance, he will not succeed, because his sustenance will pursue him just as he cannot run away from his death". (Qurtubī) Some scholars say that 'sustenance' here signifies "rain". In this case 'heaven' will not refer to the body, arch or vault of the sky. It refers to anything that hangs overhead and covers things in its shade, including the celestial atmosphere and clouds from where the rain falls. The expression 'all that you have been promised' refers to Paradise and its delights. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

(إِنَّ لِحَقَّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْكُمْ تَطْقُنُ) (...it [the Day of Recompense] is a reality, as sure as that you speak....51:23). It means that all of the matters relating to Judgement, Resurrection and Recompense that they have been promised shall certainly occur. Therefore, it is the truth, there being no doubt about it, so they should not doubt its coming, just as they do not doubt that they can speak. There are five physical sensations of perception: sight, hearing, tasting, feeling and smelling. Here 'speaking' has been singled out probably because the faculty of speech is the only one where there can be no trace of deception or illusion, whereas the other sensations, on account of ailments, can get contorted. Differences in hearing and seeing are known. In sickness the sensation of tasting gets reversed or distorted in some other way. Sometimes sweet things taste bitter and bitter things taste sweet. (Qurtubī)

Verses 24 - 46

هَلْ أَنْكَ حَدِيثُ صَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكَرَّمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ

فَقَالُوا سَلَّمًا طَّ قَالَ سَلَّمٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ (٤٥) فَرَاغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ
 بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ (٤٦) فَقَرَبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ إِلَّا تَأْكُلُونَ (٤٧) فَأَوْجَسَ
 مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً طَّ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ طَ وَبَشَّرُوهُ بِغُلْمٍ عَلِيِّمٍ (٤٨) فَاقْبَلَتِ
 امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ (٤٩) قَالُوا
 كَذَلِكٌ لَا قَالَ رَبِّكِ طَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيُّمُ (٥٠) قَالَ فَمَا خَطُبُكُمْ
 أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ (٥١) قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسَلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمٍ مُجْرِمِينَ (٥٢)
 لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِنْ طِينٍ (٥٣) مُسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
 لِلْمُسَرِّفِينَ (٥٤) فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٥٥) فَمَا
 وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (٥٦) وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ
 يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ (٥٧) وَفِي مُوسَى إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ
 بِسُلْطَنٍ مُبِينٍ (٥٨) فَتَوَلَّى بِرُكْنِهِ وَقَالَ سِحْرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ (٥٩)
 فَأَخَذَنَاهُ وَجْنُودَهُ فَنَبَذَنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ (٦٠) وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ
 أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ (٦١) مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا
 جَعَلْنَاهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ (٦٢) وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا حَتَّى حِينَ
 فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَنَاهُمُ الصُّعْقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظَرُونَ (٦٤)
 فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْتَصِرِينَ (٦٥) وَقَوْمٌ نُوحٌ مِنْ
 قَبْلٍ طَّ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ (٦٦)

Has there come to you the story of the honoured guests of Ibrāhīm? [24] When they entered unto him and said, "We greet you with *salām*." He said, "*salām* on you." (And he said to himself,) "(They are) unknown people." [25] Then he slipped off to his home, and fetched a fattened calf. [26] So he brought it close to them (to eat, but being angels, they refrained.) He said, "Would you not eat?" [27] So he felt some fear in his heart. They said, "Be

not scared." And they gave him the good news of (the birth of) a knowledgeable boy. [28] So his wife came forward with a clamour and slapped her own face and said, "(How can I have a child when I am) a barren old woman?" [29] They said, "This is how your Lord has said. Surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing." [30] He (Ibrāhīm) said (to the angels), "Then, what is your mission O messengers?" [31] They said, "We are sent to a guilty people, [32] so that we may send down upon them stones of clay, [33] marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors." [34] So, We let the believers who were there to come out (from danger), [35] but We did not find in it any Muslims, except one house. [36] And We left in this (event) a sign (of deterrence) for those who fear the painful punishment. [37] And (We left a similar sign) in (the story of) Mūsā, when We sent him to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) with a clear proof. [38] So he turned away along with his chiefs and said, "(Mūsā is) a magician or a madman!" [39] So We seized him and his army, and cast them into the sea, as he was the one who came up with culpable behaviour. [40] And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) 'Ad, when We sent upon them the wind that was barren (from any benefit); [41] it spared nothing it came upon, but rendered it like a stuff smashed by decay. [42] And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a while." [43] Then they rebelled against the command of your Lord; so the thunderbolt (of divine punishment) seized them, while they were looking on. [44] Then they were neither able to stand upright, nor could they defend themselves. [45] And (We have destroyed) the people of Nūh before; indeed they were a sinful people. [46]

Comforting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

(فَقَالُوا سَلَّمَ قَالَ سَلَامٌ) ("We greet you with *salām*." He said, "Salām on you." 51:25). The angels greeted him with *salāman* in the accusative case, whereas Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ responded to the greeting in the nominative case thus: *salāmun*. The nominative case in Arabic is a nominal sentence which carries the sense of greater strength, continuity and persistence. The Qur'ānic injunction is that 'when you are greeted with a salutation, greet one better than it...', so Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm

الله ﷺ, the Friend of Allah chose a better reply, implementing Allah's command: reciprocating the greeting with the term *salāmun* is stronger than the greeting using the term *salāman*.

فَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ([They are] unknown people."... 51:25). The word *munkar*, the letter [m] carrying *dammah* and the letter [k] carrying *fath* means "unknown". As sin or sinful work is unknown in Islām, it is also referred to as *munkar*. The angels came to Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ in the image of handsome young wonderfully graceful men; therefore he could not recognize them. He thought to himself that these are strangers and said to himself 'They are unknown to me'. Or it is possible that he might have mentioned this to the guests in the form of a question and the purpose might have been to find out who they were.

رَأَغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ (Then he slipped off to his home - 51:26). *Rāgha* is derived from *rawgh* which means to slip out quietly. In other words, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ discreetly went in the house in haste to arrange for meal for his guests, so that they do not sense it. Otherwise they would have stopped him.

Rules of Entertaining Guests

Ibn Kathīr says that this verse indicates proper manners for entertaining guests: Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ, the host, did not first mention that he would make food for them. He slipped out quietly, and brought the food to his guests quickly, while they were unaware that it was being prepared for them. Rather, he discreetly had it prepared and placed before them. He prepared the best kind of food he had, a young, fat roasted calf. Moreover, he did not place the food far from them and invite them to come close to it to eat. Rather, he placed it close to them 'فَرَأَيْهُمْ' 'brought it close to them' and refrained from ordering them to eat. Instead he invited them politely, kindly and cordially to partake thus 'أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ' 'Would you not eat?' This statement in the form of a question is similar to one of us saying to a guest, 'Would you kindly partake of it - even if you are not hungry, at least for my sake?'

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خَيْفَةً (So he felt some fear in his heart...51:28). When the guests did not eat the food, the Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ conceived fear of them. In those days it was the custom of the noble people to entertain the guests who were expected to accept the hospitality of the host. If they

did not, the host would become apprehensive that there is some danger afoot - probably they are enemies who came to cause some kind of trouble for them. In those days, even the rogues and wrongdoers had the noble quality that they would not cause any harm to anyone whose food they had eaten. Hence refusing to eat was a sign of hostility or danger.

(فَأَقْبَلَتْ امْرَأَةٌ فِي صَرَّةٍ) (So his wife came forward with a clamour,...51:29). The word *sarrah* means vociferation or clamour or most vehement clamour of crying. *Sarīr* is the sound of a pen when it is writing. When Sayyidah Sārah رضي الله عنها heard that the angels were giving good news to her husband Ibrāhīm عليه السلام of the birth of a son, she thought that this news was as good to her as it was to her husband, for the son would be theirs, and therefore, they both were getting some good news. As a result, she involuntarily screamed loudly, she struck herself upon her forehead as women do when confronted with an amazing thing and said: and slapped her own face and said, "أَعْجُوزُ عَقِيمٌ" meaning 'How can I give birth while I am an old woman? And even when I was young I was barren and could not have children.' The angels replied that Allah has power over all things and therefore this would happen even so: "This is how your Lord has said." Thus when Holy Prophet Ishaq عليه السلام was born, Sayyidah Sārah رضي الله عنها was ninety-nine years old and Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was one hundred years old. (Qurtubī)

When, in the course of the conversation, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام discovered that the guests were angels, he asked them what was their mission and they replied that they had been sent to the people of Lūt عليه السلام to destroy them as a punishment for their unspeakable crime. They would be stoned to death, but not with large stones. Small pebbles of baked clay would be sent down upon them: "مُسَوَّمَةٌ عَنْ رِبِّكَ" marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors."... 51:34), that is, pebbles conspicuously marked by Allah. Some scholars say that each stone bore the name of the person with which he was to be destroyed, and if he ran in any particular direction, he was pursued by the same stone. Other verses say that these people were destroyed by Jibra'il's عليه السلام turning their territory upside down. The two descriptions of the punishment are not mutually contradictory: Probably, the stoning incident took place first, and then the earth was turned upside down.

After the mention of the people of Lūt عليه السلام, the people of Mūsā عليه السلام,

Fir'aun and others are taken up briefly. When Mūsā ﷺ delivered the message of truth to Fir'aun, the latter reacted thus: فَتَوَلَّ يَرْكِبُه (So he turned away along with his chiefs,...51:39) The original word used for 'his chiefs' is *rukñ* which means power. Here it is used to refer to his army and chiefs of his government. In the story of Lūt ﷺ he has been mentioned saying, أَوَلَوْ أَتَى رُكْنِي شَدِيدٌ (or that I had the backing of a strong group) The word *rukñ* is used there in the same sense. (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 4/p. 658, 661: '...or that I had the backing of some strong group...')

After this, the stories of the people of 'Ād, Thamūd and Nūh ﷺ are told. These stories were narrated many times before.

Verses 47 - 55

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِإِيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوْسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشَنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ
الْمَهِدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ
فَقُرْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا
مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا أَخْرَطْ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مَنْ رَسُولٌ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾
أَتَوْا صَوْبًا بِهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ
وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الَّذِكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands. [47] And the earth was spread by Us as a floor; so excellent Spreader are We. [48] And from every thing We have created (a pair of) two kinds, so that you may receive advice. [49] So flee to Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you. [50] And do not make up any other god along with Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you. [51] In similar way, no messenger came to those before them, but they said, "(He is) a magician or a madman." [52] Have they handed down (this saying) to each other as a legacy? No, but they are a rebellious people. [53] So, turn away from them, for you are not blamed. [54] And

keep reminding, because reminding benefits the believers. [55]

Proofs of Allah's Oneness abound in the Creation of the Heavens and Earth

The preceding verses mentioned the reality of the Hereafter and the Judgement Day, and the punishment of those who denied the reality. The present set of verses reaffirm the perfect power of Allah, reminding us about the reality of the Day of Resurrection and allaying the doubt and suspicion of those who deny the reality. It proves the oneness of Allah and reiterates emphatically to believe in the Messenger ﷺ.

بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَّاَنَا لَمُوسِّعٌ (And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands.... 51:47). The word *aidin*, according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, means strength or power in this context.

نَفِرُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ (So flee to Allah....51:50). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said: "It means: Flee from your sins and take shelter in Allah for repentance." Abū Bakr Warraq and Junaid Baghdādī رحمهما الله تعالى said that the base self of man and the devil invite him to commit sins, and they deceive him. He needs to take refuge in Allah who will protect him against their evil. (Qurtubī)

Verses 56 - 60

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾
فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذَنْبًا مِثْلَ ذَنْبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me. [56] I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. [57] In fact, Allah is the All-Sustainer, Possessor of power, the Strong. [58] So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions. So, they should not ask Me to hasten on. [59] Woe, then, to those who disbelieve because of the Day of

their's that they are promised (for punishment). [60]

The Purpose of Jinn's and Mankind's creation

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْأَنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me."...51:56). This apparently may raise two questions: [1] If Allah has created a creature for a particular task, and it is His will that it should perform that task, rationally it is impossible for it to deviate from that task, because doing anything contrary to the will of Allah is inconceivable. [2] The purpose of *jinn*'s and man's creation has been restricted to the worship of Allah whereas there are many other underlying reasons and benefits in their creation.

Scholars have made different approaches to solve these problems. Some say that this verse pertains to the believers only, that is, only believing *jinn* and believing mankind are created for worship and for no other task. It is obvious that the believers are more or less steadfast to worship. This is the view of *Dahhāk*, *Sufyān Thawrī* and others. According to one version of *Sayyidnā* *Ibn 'Abbas* ﷺ, the word *mu'minīn* does occur in the verse thus: 'وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْأَنْسَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ' And I have not created the believing *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me'. This version supports the view that the verse is only in connection with the believers.

Another answer to the question, given by *Moulānā* *Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī*, رحمه الله تعالى, is that: Allah has commanded all to worship, but at the same time He has equipped them with free will. Some of them exercised their God-given free will correctly and chose to worship Him, but others used their God-given free will incorrectly and deviated from worshipping Him. This is what *Sayyidnā* 'Alī ﷺ has said, as quoted by *Baghawī*. *Tafsīr Mazhārī* gives a plain and simple explication of this verse: Allah has equipped every *jinn* and man with the innate capacity to worship. Some use the capacity rightly and succeed, while others employ it wrongly in sinning and fulfilling their base emotions, and thus destroy it. The Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَإِبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدُهُ أَوْ يُمْحِسَانُهُ

"Every child is born according to the *fitrah* but his parents [cause him to deviate from the unadulterated propensity] and

turn him into a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."

According to the majority of the scholars, *fitrah* here refers to the religion of Islam. Just as this Tradition tells us that every man is born with the natural capacity for Islam and true faith, but his parents adulterate and destroy that capacity, and put him on to the ways of disbelief, in the same way the phrase 'except that they should worship Me' could mean that every member of jinn and mankind has the natural, inborn capacity to worship Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Answer to the second question is that bringing any creation into being for the purpose of worship does not necessarily imply that they are unfit for other functions of life.

نَّا لَرْبُّهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّيْقٍ (I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me...51:57). It means that by creating *jinn* and mankind, Allah does not stand in need of them, so that they will have to produce sustenance for Him or for themselves or for any of His other creations or that they earn to feed Him. This has been stated according to the general trend of people. The most affluent of men buys a slave and spends on him not for nothing, but he has an underlying purpose: He expects the slaves to work for him, help him in his tasks, fulfil his needs and earn livelihood for his master. Allah is immaculate, pure and above all these things. In creating human beings, He does not profit or benefit anything.

The word ذُنُوبٌ *dhanūb* in verse 59 is with *fath* on the letter [dh] which means a large bucket that is kept at the common wells of a locality for the purpose of drawing and filling water. A turn is designated for each of the persons using the large common bucket to draw out water from the well, so that he is conveniently able to fill it in his own private bucket in his turn. Thus the word here is employed in the sense of turn, share or portion. Hence it is translated above as follows: "So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions." The verse purports to warn the disbelievers that the past communities were given an opportunity to work. When each of these communities did not take advantage of the opportunity in their respective time and persisted in their evil course, they were punished and destroyed. Likewise, the present pagans of Makkah are designated a time and opportunity. If

they do not take advantage of the allocated time and opportunity and persist in their paganism, they will be punished in this world; otherwise the punishment of the Hereafter is most certain. They will thus meet with a fate similar to that of the opponents of former Prophets. Like them they will come to a sad end. This verse, in which the word *dhanūban* occurs, indicates that they will receive their due share of the torment, and it will surely come in due time; so they should not ask for it to be hastened on or rushed to them.

Alḥamdu lillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt
Ends here